

## **Botulinum toxin (*Clostridium botulinum*)**

**Louisiana Office of Public Health Laboratory Services (LA SPHL) (504) 568-5371 or (504) 568-8102, 24 Hour Pager (504) 374-6669 or (877) 309-2867**

**Louisiana Office of Public Health Infectious Disease Epidemiology  
(800) 256-2748 (24 hours)**

Remember that these samples may be highly infective! Extreme caution should be taken in collecting, preparing for shipment and transporting any material suspected of being contaminated with a biological agent.

Botulinum toxin has been developed as an aerosolized weapon. There is no human data on the effects of breathing this toxin, but it may resemble the foodborne syndrome. In case of a bioterrorism event, people may be exposed by breathing in the toxin or by ingesting contaminated food or water.

If cases of botulinum toxin exposure are suspected **through clinical diagnosis**, CDC should be contacted through Louisiana Office of Public Health Infectious Epidemiology (800) 256-2748 or Louisiana Office of Public Health Laboratory Services (504) 568-5371. Arrangements will be made at that time for the shipment of samples to CDC for testing.

**The State Public Health Laboratory is not equipped to process specimens for botulinum toxin.**

CDC maintains the national supply of botulism anti-toxin and will ship the antitoxin when needed. CDC is also available for consultation with physicians 24 hours a day. Botulism can be fatal and should be considered a medical emergency.